



Trade Show Preparation

The work necessary for a successful trade show can be overwhelming, especially if trade show planning is not your full-time job. Start planning your next trade show at least 6-8 months prior to the event.

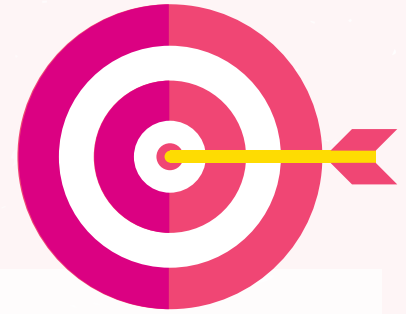
Utilize this Trade Show Guide to help you through the preparation process.

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Goals and objectives

Define and communicate your company's goals and objectives for the trade show.



Tip #1

Develop specific, measurable goals. For example, booth traffic, number of demos given, and number of leads generated.

Tip #2

Be sure goals are clear and measurable, with no ambiguity.

Tip #3

Lead generation: Define what you are looking for in quantity or quality of leads (specify what constitutes a quality lead for your company).

Research

Research is important in determining the best trade show for your company.



Tip #4 Social Media is a great way to research trade shows. Each social media platform lends itself to specific industries and niches.



Geared toward professional networks and a great place to follow trade show organizers, exhibitors, speakers, and attendees.



News, insights, and real-time updates.



Great for visual content (photos and videos).



Join trade show pages, groups, and events, or create an event and invite followers.

Develop an overall master plan

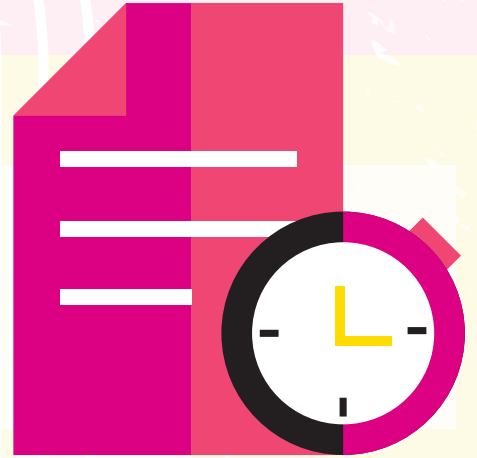
Keep everyone on task and keep your master plan organized by utilizing organizational tools.

Tip #5

Create your plan in Excel, Word, or Microsoft Project. Excel tends to provide the most flexibility.

Tip #6

Keep a summary page/tab for easy top-line visibility and quick communication of plan status.



Budget

You risk many problems without a budget, so consider these tips early in the process.



Tip #7

Start early and keep the entire team informed on the budget.

Tip #8

Know your event priorities and list them in the priority level.

Tip #9

Utilize spreadsheets to organize the event budget.

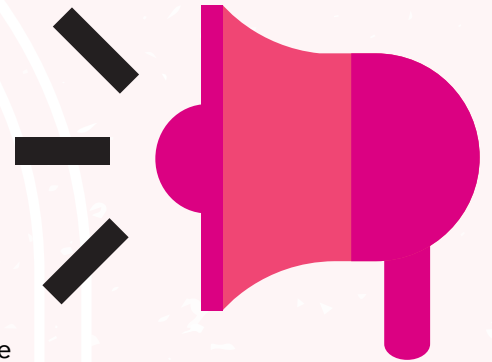
Tip #10

Detail all the expenses (even the small ones), stay accurate with the cost, and understand that the price of one item may affect another item's cost.

Promote

Promotion includes written, digital, and spoken messaging. Some examples are pre-show advertising, website, booth graphics, exhibit hall advertising, signage, show specials and promotions, product station messaging, and demos.

Social media is a perfect avenue to promote your presence at a trade show because most people have a digital presence on at least one social media platform. How do you decide which platforms to utilize when marketing for a trade show?



- Figure out which platforms will most effectively reach your target audience
- Determine what social media tools the trade show organizers use to connect
- Create content that differentiates you from your competitors
- Make sure the social media platform you are using is displayed
- Monitor and track the content on your social media
- Share your story about your business and brand on social media

Tip #11

Create a story or compelling reason for visitors to want to enter your booth.

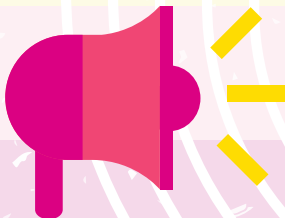
Tip #12

Use existing, approved messaging and tweak it for this application. Review and confirm messaging is applied consistently across all pre-show, show, and post-show messaging.

Tip #13

Be sure your messaging follows a logical hierarchy:

- Company vision
- Product line
- Overall show theme
- Individual booth stations
- Product scripts/demo guidelines



Create a “Wow” exhibit designed around your goals

Your exhibit is an opportunity to bring your company story alive. Apply your company’s vision and value proposition in a creative, unique way to maximize your customer’s overall impression. Create a customer experience that will set your booth apart from your competition.

Tip #14

Define in-booth activity areas deliberately, not leaving anything to chance. Determine an appropriate customer flow based on their interests and needs.

Tip #15

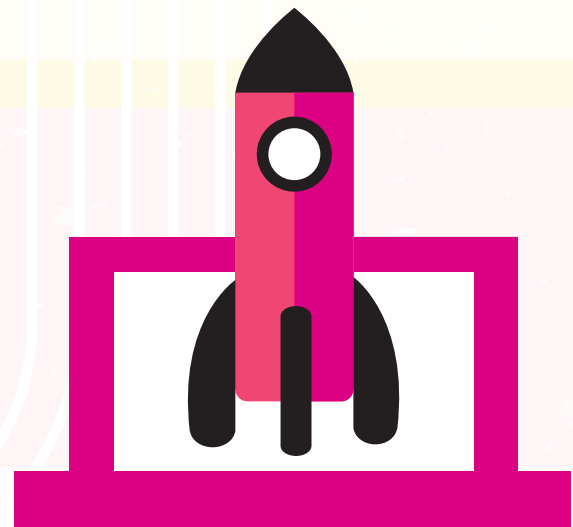
Follow all the rules and regulations for conference exhibitors.

Tip #16

Uncover any exhibit hall restrictions (such as booth height and maximum hanging sign height) that can limit or negatively impact the successful execution of your booth design.

Individual Booth Stations

Tie your message plan with your booth design and flow plan. Each booth station should have a specific purpose, message, and lead generation opportunity. Ensure your product/service demonstration stations, interactive games, in-booth education, or market research kiosks have a specific objective.



Tip #17

Create an outline for each station, including but not limited to the following:

- Product/service positioning
- Brand messaging
- Sales script
- Demo specifics
- Support materials
- Research questionnaire

Choose the right staff and train them

Staffing can be challenging, and your company's culture and the relationship between sales and marketing management help determine who is best to staff your booth.



Tip #18

Sales managers make the best booth captains because they have formal and informal authority over the sales team attending the show and can best ensure they engage with attendees.

Tip #19

While cost-effective, only staffing the booth with local sales reps may leave potential customers from other regions under-served. Sales reps are motivated by money, so customers not in their region represent wasted time as they will never reap the benefits of their sales efforts. Instead, consider bringing reps from various territories and incentivizing them to serve all potential customers from their region.

Tip #20

Allow all booth staff generous practice time to rehearse their in-booth demo/scripts.

Tip #21

Decide on the dress code early in the planning process so you have time to communicate with the booth staff and gather sizes for logo shirts.

Order promotional materials for exhibit and promotion

Promotional items increase future sales. If you hand out a free branded promotional product, potential customers will remember your brand the next time they are in the market for your product and service.

Tip #22 People look at your brand positively when you give away branded promotional items. Here is how you can make promotional items work at a trade show:

- Require attendees to do something for the promotional item to feel like they earned it
Example- Play a game or complete a market research survey and they receive the promo item
- Care about what you give away and make it personal by handing the items to the attendees
- Presentation matters, so make the promo items a part of an eye-catching display that stands out from the other booths



Tip #23
Reach out to customers ahead of the show and plug special promotional items you will give out at the show.

Tip #24
Consider the size and weight of the items. Many of the attendees will be traveling and may have limited space in their luggage or may want to avoid carrying around a heavy item during the trade show.